(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river. 133

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricultural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages. 133 137

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all. 133 241

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'îd, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt. [166 464]

2. — Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural. 162 241

and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawâr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

This uneven distribution, though it may be explained by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

There is still another factor of prime importance to be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadventurous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*bardri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

the fellaheen are mere 'creatures', in which there is no point in interesting oneself, and which it is considered good form to know nothing about. Faced with the simplest of queries about them, the rich often show an ignorance which makes it quite clear that such questions have never occured to them, and arouse no curiosity. Even the best of them, while deploring the dullness and hidebound habits of the fellah, will do nothing to help him that might lessen their own income. All this maintains the gulf between the two extremes. 565 369

There is, however, a country middle class, consisting of medium landowners. Like the smallholders, they are closely attached to the village. Conservative, gain-loving and unpretentious, they live in the country and keep a close watch on the yield of their feddans. At feasts and funerals they give generously to their poor neighbours. From this class are drawn the pupils who fill the primary and secondary schools in the provinces, the students of the religious institutes dependent on Al-Azhar, the Government employees, and a number of police officers. It has produced the great men of contemporary Egypt, such as Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Nahas Pasha, and Dr Taha Hussein. 565 423 181

These patriarchal families are, however, becoming fewer and fewer. One reason is the growth of their wealth and ambition. The second generation makes its way into the higher levels, and settles in Cairo or Alexandria. This exodus from the fields was largely encouraged by the boom of 1919-20, but apart from this the westernised education of the young and the taste for European things have produced a distaste for country life. Cairo and Alexandria, during the last fifteen years, have developed considerably in size and in amenities. Every year there is a new influx of wealthy provincials from the chief towns and villages in all the mudiriyas. Villas and blocks of flats spring up everywhere and luxury shops do a thriving trade. 556 565 166

A second reason for the decay of this middle class is the splitting up of estates by inheritance, for families are large. According to Moslem Law, which is universally applicable, the sons receive two parts each to the daughter's one. It is by no means unusual to find the grandson of a man who had 40 feddans inheriting no more than one, so that he falls back to the level of the fellaheen. 565 428 423

The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is education. /183

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not founded on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious. /185 /203

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, and that his present state of insensibility and habituation is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same. /183 /185 /871

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" (''). As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land. /166

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer /162 /166 /184

F
184 or richer, but at least with their eyes opened — a certain distaste is noticeable for the hard toil of the fields.

E In 1937 there were in Cairo 188,000 persons of Upper
F Egyptian origin, and 200,000 from the provinces of Lower
162 Egypt, an increase of over 150,000 in ten years. The
166 *mudiriya* of Assiut had lost 50,000 to the capital, and Menufiya, the most thickly populated province, more than 70,000. These figures are an indication not so much of the spread of education, as of poverty and overcrowding.

E A glance at the fellah colonies established in Cairo
186 shows that they form veritable villages, grouped according
166 to their place of origin in odd quarters of the capital such as Sharabiya or Kolâly. They keep to themselves, meet at special cafés, and cling to their country customs as long as possible. Generally it is the men that have migrated, leaving their wives and children in the villages; which proves
E that they hope to return. They find work most often as
464 building labourers, taken on for the day by a *rayess* ; they
465 are better paid than in the fields (about P.T. 5 a day, pre-war rate), but just as badly treated, and always in danger of unemployment.

E After a few years' experience some come back to their
166 native places poorer than ever, or perhaps well enough off
464 to buy the plot of land they dreamed of. Others settle in the
511 city and work as navvies, porters, servants, or hawkers,
557 fastening like flies on to the wealth of the city, just as the hovels they live in cling to the edges of the better quarters. They form a parasitic growth which never becomes part of the city. Some few manage to worm their way in, and develop into big merchants, contractors, or brokers; but they are not in the least interested in improving the quarter from which they came. They trample on their old associates instead of helping them to rise.

The distress of the fellah remains.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

131.

A Friendly Reception.

539x 166 464

At a time when profits were low, a Nile sailor left his ship and went, perhaps to Suez, in search of other work. He then knocked about in the Delta, and after a long absence, returned home, at last, to his wife and children, who, in the meantime had suffered need. The wife receives him with this cutting reproof, the sense of which is: Did I not tell you what the result would be? But what do you care about your family! (ll. 3—8). [593]

We often heard from our workmen, that, in order to secure work, they wander, for instance, from Quft in Upper Egypt, to Suez. This song was usually attached to No. 88 with which it has nothing to do. The connection is probably suggested only because of the picture of the ship used in No. 88.

Ya ma ʾultĕ-lak, ya ma ʾultĕ-lak 593
winte lissa fi-ʾangelak?: 539x
Ya yehūdi, yabn-el-yehudīye, 464
hissak terūḥ eš-šarʾīye,
yaḥdūk bilād el-ġarbīye,
tiṣbaḥ ʿadīm. id-dirrīye.
Dannak ʿala-l-muʾdāf rāiḥ
teṭallaʿ er-raml es-saiḥ.

Did I not tell thee so, did I not tell thee so?
When thou wast yet on thy ship?
"Thou Jew and son of the Jewess, [186]
Beware of going to the Sharʾīye,